



# Informal employment, gender and vulnerability in agriculture based economies: evidence from Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe

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# Introduction



- Contemporary high level of vulnerability experienced in the economic crisis and drought context.
- Dramatic changes in livelihood patterns:
  - Collapse of the formal economy and growth of the informal economy
  - Rural and urban household vulnerability and as a result failing to sustain each other
  - Urban-rural reverse migration for households and individuals seeking to evade risk and vulnerability

# Methodology and Research Methods



- Quantitative and qualitative research
- Structured and semi-structured household questionnaires
- An advanced systematic household random sample of 150 households
- The study was conducted in Masvingo Province's Ndanga subdistrict
- The subdistrict has population demographics pertinent to the study and is also closer to Masvingo town for income diversification evidence sought
- The study was conducted over a 3 months period

# Results



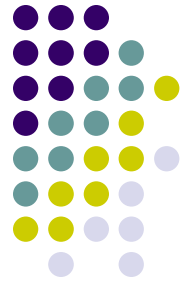
- Activities that increased in intensity after the crisis

Gardening, livestock farming, off-farm informal wage employment, off-farm self employment, hunting, gathering, collecting wild fruits and fishing

- Activities that decreased in intensity after the crisis

Agricultural wage employment, rain-fed agricultural farming, off-farm formal wage employment

# Results continued...



- Variation of household and agricultural roles (active men and women, children, old age vs specific or assigned roles)
- Female household income contributions < male household income contributions
- Dependency groups (children and elderly) actively involved in household coping strategies and contributing to household income despite their dependency nature



## Results continued...

- **Social processes and responses to on-farm and off-farm activities**
  - Diamond mining and outmigration trends and patterns
  - Overseas migration and employment trends and patterns
  - Childhood and old age in a crisis context: waiting for the Godot?
  - Road side and urban selling



# Arising issues

- The importance of human mobility in an economic and drought context
- Small holder farmers consider drastic and desperate strategies to offset vulnerability irregardless of the risk associated
- Increased vulnerability to dollarisation, global recession for rural livelihoods rendered coping almost impossible

# Conclusion and policy implications



- Equal opportunities for the mobility of men and women should be considered
- Promotion of decent work in the heterogeneous informal economy
- Recognising the non-farm sector's complementary role to agriculture
- A holistic approach to rural development which improves inter and intra-sectoral linkages
- Nurturing identified gaps and linkages for poverty eradication

THANK YOU

